

E 430

.U58

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



00005022800





THE
ADDRESS AND PROCEEDINGS
OF THE
FRIENDS OF DANIEL WEBSTER,

ASSEMBLED IN FANEUIL HALL,

On Wednesday, September 15th, 1852,

IN
MASS CONVENTION.

✓
Hester was a delegate
County, Massachusetts Convention, 1852.
BOSTON:
JAMES FRENCH, 78 WASHINGTON STREET,
psr
1852.

E430
.w58

DEAR SIR:—Please read and circulate this copy of the Proceedings of the
WEBSTER UNION WHIG CONVENTION.

By request of Executive Committee.

A. WILSON, Secretary.

PRESS OF THE
FRANKLIN PRINTING HOUSE,
210 Washington Street,
Boston.

PROCEEDINGS.

THE friends of DANIEL WEBSTER and the Union, assembled in Faneuil Hall on Wednesday, the 15th inst., at 12 o'clock, for deliberation and action.

The Convention was called to order by CHARLES A. WELLS of Boston, and temporarily organized by the choice of HENRY LYMAN of Watertown, as Chairman, and JAMES FRENCH and S. M. HOBBS of Boston, as Secretaries.

MESSRS. D. F. MCGILVRAY, Charles Torrey, James French, C. R. Ransom, and Charles A. Wells, were deputed a Committee to retire, select, and report a list of permanent officers for the Convention.

MR. TORREY, in answer to a general call, made a brief address, which was received with great applause.

The Committee on Organization here reported the following list of officers :

For *President*, HENRY LYMAN of Watertown.

For *Vice Presidents*, THOS. THACHER of Roxbury, JAS. DALTON of Boston, GEO. REVERE of Needham, CHAS. A. WELLS, LEVI BRIGHAM, WM. SHIMMIN of Boston, LUTHER GRIFFING of Richmond, DUDLEY HALL of Medford, CHAS. TORREY of Boston, JESSE CHICKERING of West Roxbury, B. P. POORE of West Newbury, SAM'L L. CUTTER of Cambridge, and PLINY CUTLER of Boston.

For *Secretaries*, SAMUEL KETTELL, JAMES FRENCH, JAMES L. BAKER, and SAMUEL M. HOBBS.

The report was unanimously accepted, and adopted, and the officers having taken their seats on the platform, Pres. LYMAN made a brief speech of thanks.

On motion of Archelaus Wilson of Boston, that gentleman and Messrs. Hubbard Winslow, and Charles Torrey were appointed a Committee to prepare an Address to the people of Massachusetts, setting forth the reasons of the present movement of the Union Whigs.

MESSRS. J. L. DIMMOCK, S. L. CUTTER, C. A. WHITE, J. Q. KETTELL, and Edw. A. Vose were appointed a Committee to report a list of Webster Electors to the Convention.

HUBBARD WINSLOW, here, in response to a call, made a short speech, to show the cause of Mr. Webster's defeat at Baltimore, and also in defence of the present movement.

MESSRS. CHAS. A. WHITE, Arthur Pickering, J. D. HEDGE, J. FULLERTON, and Chas. A. Wells, were appointed a Committee to report the names of ten persons who shall constitute the "WEBSTER STATE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF MASSACHUSETTS."

MR. WILSON, on behalf of the Committee on the subject, here reported the following—

ADDRESS

TO THE WHIGS OF MASSACHUSETTS.

The step which a very large number of your fellow citizens, now assembled in Faneuil Hall, are about to take, is a highly important one, and should be taken upon rendered reasons.

We are met here, most of us, doubtless, as Whigs; not unaccompanied, perhaps, by some of our Democratic friends, who sympathise with us in our desire to do justice to a great statesman, who is the property of no party, but who belongs, in a high sense, equally to us all. Still, the great body of this assembly consists, undoubtedly, of Whigs; and it is therefore to our fellow Whigs that we are chiefly to submit what we have to say. At the same time we cannot forget that we are here also as American citizens, standing upon the soil of a free country, and free to act according to our own convictions of duty.

The representatives of the Whig party, chosen as such according to its usages, and assembled in National Convention, have by a very small majority, made a nomination of a distinguished officer of the army for the Presidency of the United States; and the first inquiry to be made by us, as members of that party, is, whether we in any just sense are bound to vote for this candidate, and for no other? It needs, in our judgment, no great amount of argument to solve this question. Upon the great general principle on which all our institutions rest, the majority are to rule; and when the voice of the majority is expressed in those forms which constitute the enactment of *Law*, no man can go behind it, or absolve himself from its obligations, while he remains in society. This principle is attempted to be applied by analogy to the doings of political parties. But the analogy is extremely imperfect. There is a broad distinction between the decrees or decisions of a body of the representatives of a party, in reference to the obligations which they impose upon its members, and the decrees of the legislative representatives of the people, in reference to the obligations which they impose upon the citizen. The former cannot, in the nature of things, have the force of law, because they do not rest upon its sanctions. They must, therefore, be referred for approval to the judgment of individuals, who are to receive and obey them, according to their own convictions of their intrinsic propriety and fitness to promote the public good.

We speak here, of course, of the rule that is applicable to the citizen who has taken no part in initiating or conducting the party proceedings, which have led to a particular result. What rule is applicable to those

who have taken part in those proceedings, we have now no occasion to inquire. We speak for those and to those who stand free from such connection, but are yet members of the same party; and we have no hesitation in saying, that the attempt which has been made to force upon such persons an obligation of honor to support a nomination which they may disapprove, is without a shadow of justification. The decision of a National Party Convention is in no sense conclusive upon the conduct of all the members of that party throughout the country. If it were, neither the regularity nor fairness of the proceedings, nor the fitness of the candidate nominated, could ever be inquired into. The truth is, that the act of a majority of the delegates in a National Party Convention is not the act of a majority of all the members of the party, unless it is assumed that all are actually or technically represented. That all are not actually represented, is perfectly well known. Not a quarter part of the voters of any great political party ever take part in the proceedings by which the delegates to such a body are appointed; and it is one of the easiest, as it is one of the most common of political transactions, for political managers, especially in some of the other States of this Union, to procure the appointment of delegates, whose purposes as to the selection of a presidential candidate are no certain and safe guide to the real wishes and preferences of a majority of their nominal constituents. The position, therefore, that the act of a majority of such delegates is the act of a majority of the members of the party, must rest upon the doctrine that all the members had notice, and might have attended the choice of delegates if they had seen fit. That is to say, it rests upon a fiction, by which every man's political conscience and conduct are to become bound by the acts and doings of his neighbor. For ourselves we reject this doctrine. We hold that the decision of a majority of the delegates in a National Convention is not, of itself, proof of the sentiments and wishes of a majority of the party; and we think that any man who will ask himself whether he can believe that a majority of the Whigs of the United States this day prefer General Scott as a candidate, to Daniel Webster or Millard Fillmore, will be satisfied with the soundness of our position. We are here, then, in all the freedom of our individual judgments. In that freedom we propose to examine the nomination made at Baltimore, and to refer the action of the Convention which made it to the only standard which we recognize, namely, its tendency to promote and secure the good of the country.

The Convention assembled at Baltimore, it is to be presumed, for the purpose of nominating that person for the Presidency, in whom would be united high qualifications for the office, with reasonable chances for obtaining it by the suffrages of the people. This is the duty of a party Convention, under ordinary circumstances. But on the occasion of the late Whig National Convention, the circumstances were peculiar and extraordinary. One of the candidates before that Convention was, confessedly, the first

statesman in America then capable of being thought of for the office. He was a person who had rendered services of the utmost importance to his party. On three several occasions he had supported with the whole power of his vast influence, rivals, whose claims to the nomination, except in one instance, could be supposed by no one to be superior to his own. But above and beyond all this, he had rendered to his country services which surpassed those to his party, in as large a measure as country is greater than party to every true patriot. He was, moreover, a person fitted beyond all men within the reach of the Whig party, not merely to adorn, but most beneficially to administer the high office in question. This was felt and acknowledged every where by all candid persons. The common judgment of the country, the current and admitted forms of speech, the general consent of right-thinking minds, had made his pre-eminent fitness for that great trust a maxim among men. A wide and confident expectation among the masses of the people, who had nothing to gain and much to lose by adverse political combinations, looked to the Whig party, in confidence that it would do the justice to the country, to itself, and to Mr. Webster, to put him in nomination.

The time was most propitious. Party animosity had died away before the signal merit of services, which challenged the equal admiration and gratitude of friends and opponents. Personal detraction, save from the kennels of a rabid fanaticism, had ceased to pursue him. Public confidence, respect, affectionate admiration and pride, universal appreciation of the vast importance to the country of his life, health and happiness, broke forth to him, wherever popular feeling had an opportunity of expression. Never had a party such an opportunity to confer a vast good upon a free country; and never was such an opportunity more unworthily lost.

It was lost, we are told, because a majority of those who were sent to the Convention to select a candidate preferred some one else, and chose to exercise their preferences. We admit the fact; but, as a portion of the people of this country, we claim and shall exercise the right to judge of the reasonableness and propriety of those preferences. By whatsoever constituency each of those delegates was appointed, they were all assembled to execute a public trust upon public motives. A great party organization, like any other social instrumentality, is a trust in the hands of those who hold it; to be exercised and discharged upon motives which will bear the test of subsequent examination and submission to the moral judgment of mankind.

Mr. Webster was set aside in the National Convention, and Gen. Scott was preferred by a majority of the members;—first, because the latter, being a military man, supposed to have gained great personal popularity by his military success, was believed to be, in the language of party tacticians, the more “available” candidate. We will not do any member of that convention the injustice to suppose, that his preference was determined by

a belief that the military candidate possessed superior fitness for the office of President. The ruling motive, in this case, was the same which, on two former occasions, had led to the selection, by the Whig party, of military men as candidates for the Presidency, to the exclusion of their most experienced and most accomplished statesmen: in one of which instances, the candidate was without any civil experience whatever. Against this principle of political action we desire and intend to enter our protest. It is an appeal to the people, contrary to the truth of the case, to regard military success as evidence of a fitness to discharge the highest civil trust in the country, as well as the ablest and most accomplished and experienced statesmen in the land.

There is no executive government in the world, in which civil wisdom and a trained practical statesmanship are so necessary as in the Presidency of this great republic. Consider for a moment that our government is founded on, and administered under, a written Constitution; and that the doctrines which are to go into that high office and be practically applied in administering that Constitution, if they are to be of the least value, must be the fruit of long civil study, of practical acquaintance with principles, and of vast civil experience. Consider that the whole machinery of the government is civil administration. Consider that all the offices which a President holds in his hand for distribution—from the highest of the Judiciary, who may have to pass upon even *his* acts, to the tide-waiter upon the wharves, who is to obey without questioning the law—are all to be filled by the exercise of a discretion, which can exist, in full and just development, only after great experience in the civil departments of government. Consider the great influence which the character and opinions of a President exert over the legislation of the country;—an influence which the Constitution contemplated, and which usage has made quite as powerful as it was ever designed to be. Consider, finally, that the foreign relations of this country are at all times full of questions, for the right management of which a military life and military experience can afford scarcely any training whatever.

We are not in the slightest degree desirous to detract from the just merits of Gen. Scott, as a highly distinguished and successful soldier, or to refuse to him appropriate honors and rewards for his very brilliant military services to the country. But we do not consider that the Presidency is the appropriate honor, or that it is fit that it should be held and bestowed as a reward for military distinction. If we have taken a correct view of the duties which it involves, we are compelled frankly to say, that we do not know what evidence the distinguished nominee of the Baltimore Convention has given, of that degree of fitness for it, which a Whig candidate ought to possess. We say a Whig candidate—for we are not prepared to admit that the Whig party is morally at liberty to regard only the elements of popular success in the canvass, and to treat its most eminent leaders, its wisest

statesmen, and its long-trying and faithful champions, with neglect and injustice, because they do not possess the means of appealing to a popular love of military glory. The Whig party is an organization professing distinctive political principles. It has benefitted the country, through the labors of its great statesmen, who have established, defended, and administered the principles which characterize it, and by which alone it can continue to be useful. If it is to cast such men aside, and bestow the highest honors of the Republic upon those, whose sphere of action has not identified them with the maintenance or illustration of the great principles which constitute it a party, it will either achieve victories fruitless of benefit to the country, or achieve its own destruction.

We are not prepared to see the Whig party go down in the confusion and inefficiency which must ensue from the continuance of a practice, that removes its great statesmen from their true positions as its leaders, its counsellors and guides. We cannot thus surrender its glorious civil history, which has been marked from its early formation as a party, in all its successes and all its reverses, with unquestionable usefulness. We cannot forget that it was Whig statesmanship, of the very highest order, which maintained a long contest with a powerful adverse executive, and thereby prevented the Constitution from being wholly wrested out of its legitimate sphere. We cannot forget whose voice and whose influence it was, that came to the aid of that executive, in an hour when patriotism demanded the oblivion of all party differences, and crushed nullification forever. We cannot forget that it has been Whig policy, vindicated and sustained by Whig leaders, that has given to the industry of the country all the protection it has ever enjoyed, and to internal improvements, all the vitality they have ever felt. We cannot forget that it was a Whig civilian, who rescued the country from a foreign war, and whose words of warning, wisdom, truth and courage, dispelled the gathered clouds of domestic strife, that were about to burst in fury over the land. All that the Whig party has ever accomplished for the country, all the principles that it has made efficient in the administration of the Federal Constitution, and all the positive blessings which it has achieved for the Union, it owes to the labors of its statesmen, sustained by the intelligence and patriotism of the people. No act of ours shall ever have a tendency to destroy the influence and limit the usefulness of that order of public men, of whom the greatest living example now presents, in his own person, the strongest proof that party neglect may become a public injury.

There is another ground upon which it is impossible for us to support the nomination made at Baltimore, which we shall briefly lay before you.

During the administration which is soon to terminate, this country passed through the most dangerous crisis which has occurred since the formation of the government. The firm and willing maintenance and administration of the measures deemed necessary to meet that crisis, are, beyond all doubt,

essential to the continued tranquility and peace of the Union. The Whig party has affirmed this position as a capital article of its creed : and it is a circumstance of no small significance, that the Democratic party has done the same thing. Yet it is a fact, incapable, we think, of denial, that the distinguished head of the army was selected and brought forward as a candidate, by that portion of the Whig party, who deny the propriety of affirming the finality of the Compromise Measures, and who mean to hold themselves at liberty to renew the sectional agitation of those questions, whenever they see fit. The fact that a majority of his original supporters in the Convention—sixty-six in number—voted against the platform of principles which the Convention adopted, can leave no doubt as to their sentiments and their purposes. Whether it was under their influence or some other, that the Convention was kept in ignorance of the personal sentiments of the candidate, and that private information only was given to a few persons, whose sense of public duty was supposed likely to be satisfied with private information, we do not think it material to inquire. Nor is the fact of decisive importance, that the candidate personally approved or favored the original enactment of the measures in question, or that he has subsequently, in accepting the candidacy, as a matter of necessity, accepted the platform of the party which offered to him the nomination. The position of the party itself is, however, of great consequence. It has formally declared the duty of maintaining and executing a series of measures of great public importance. At the same time, it has rejected two candidates identified with the enactment and execution of those measures, and personally responsible for their existence, and has adopted a candidate who is not identified with them, and whose principle supporters in one entire section of the Union refused to acknowledge the duty of preserving and enforcing them.

Under these circumstances, it is impossible for us to shut our eyes to the danger, that the Whig party—whatever may be the personal wishes of its head—may be withdrawn, as a party, from one section of the Union, and be obliged to find its principal and most efficient support in another section. An administration that should come into power, in such a posture, might prolong the nominal existence of the party, only to turn it into a sectional organization ; and the personal wishes or honest intentions of its chief would avail little in the execution of measures, which his principal supporters might be unwilling to execute, in favor of a portion of the country that did not contribute materially to the strength of his administration.

We make no impeachment of the integrity of the candidate. We look at public facts, the position of the Whig party, and the interests of the country ; and upon these we are constrained to say, that we cannot feel the force of the appeal that is made to us, upon public grounds, to support this nomination. The position in which we are placed is not of our own choosing. It has been forced upon us by those who had objects to gain in

which we cannot participate, and we must act upon our own sense of duty, exercised upon the facts by which we are surrounded.

Deprived, by these considerations, of the power of voting for the regular candidate of our own party, we do not choose to be driven to the alternative presented by the Democratic nomination. We know too well the importance of avoiding all affiliation with those who have brought upon our own Commonwealth the mischiefs and disgraces of the "Coalition." With you we mean to defend the time-honored institutions of the State, and to place at the head of its government an able and honorable man, whose administration will be worthy of its long established character. But to the principles on which we act, in relation to national interests, we remain firm; and for the sake of those principles, and to do all that we can to secure their just influence, we place in nomination the electoral ticket which we now present to you.

In the event of the success of either of the other candidates for the Presidency, the public life of the first statesman of the country must be terminated. The unrivalled intellect and lofty patriotism which Massachusetts has for more than thirty years given to the councils of the country, must be forever withdrawn from every department of the public service. It were vain to ask how this void is to be filled. But if it must happen before the ordination of Providence brings it upon us, is it a thing quite unworthy of Massachusetts, that the last honors which the ballot box can render, should be bestowed upon him who has done so much for her honor, her influence, her prosperity and her security? Time was, when she deemed it no idle and empty ceremony to confer upon him her electoral vote, although it stood alone. On that occasion her vote was not necessary to his fame, or demanded for personal gratification; nor is it now. But then, as now, a deep popular sense of justice, and a clear popular sentiment of gratitude sought expression through the suffrages of the people, and proclaimed to all the world that a nice balance of advantages, not easy to be discerned, does not always become a people who have been served as the people of Massachusetts have been served by DANIEL WEBSTER.*

If she looks no farther than to her own domestic history, she sees in that life which has spent its vast treasures for her welfare, the occasion for no ordinary feeling. The very foundations of the State Constitution, which has been such a blessing to her, and to the defence of which her people are now called to rally, were deepened by his labors. To his wisdom and eloquence she owes much of its strength and virtue. To his courage and his profound knowledge of the principles of free government, she owes directly many of the inestimable safeguards which its principles enshrine. And when to this older record of great service she adds the long catalogue of

* Any one who will consider how very improbable is the election of Gen. Scott, even with the electoral vote of Massachusetts, will see, that a vote cast for the Scott ticket, in this State, is thrown away, in a sense far more plain and palpable, than it can be if cast for Mr. Webster.

deeds, which have filled up the measure of her national renown, and connected her name with the preservation of a Union which she was one of the foremost to create, she will never account that suffrage an unworthy or useless act, which seeks, in honoring him, to honor all that has been most noble in her own history since that Union was formed.

But we do not limit our hopes to a complimentary vote by the people of Massachusetts.

We call upon the friends of the Union everywhere, throughout the country, to arouse themselves from the lethargy which is upon them, and to act with the vigor that becomes them.

We call upon independent Whigs everywhere, to reject an organization which will hand down the national government to a sectional fragment of their great party, in hands that they cannot approve.

We call upon the People everywhere to undo the work of politicians of every party, who would persuade them that they have too little intelligence to confer their highest honors upon their best statesmen, and that military reputation is the best avenue to the government of this great Republic. Even now, if they will assume their own rightful control over the destinies of their country, it is not too late to place at the head of its affairs an administration worthy of its better days, and able to perpetuate, to a United People, a Constitution which has made the blessings of Liberty and Union One and Inseparable.

The Address was adopted by acclamation, and the Convention then adjourned to half-past seven o'clock in the evening.

EVENING SESSION.

The Convention re-assembled at half-past seven o'clock, at which hour the hall was thronged to its fullest capacity. The President stated the first business in order was to hear the reports of the Committees appointed in the morning; where upon John L. Dimmick, from the Committee on the subject, submitted the following list of Electors:

PRESIDENTIAL ELECTORS.

AT LARGE—PLINY CUTLER, of Boston.

EDWARD A. NEWTON, of Pittsfield.

DISTRICT No. 1—ISAIAH GIFFORD, of Provincetown.

“ “ 2—LEMUEL MAY, of Attleboro’.

“ “ 3—FREDERICK W. LINCOLN, of Canton.

“ “ 4—WILLIAM HAYDEN, of Boston.

“ “ 5—GEORGE T. CURTIS, of Boston.

“ “ 6—MARK HEALEY, of Lynn.

“ “ 7—ALBERT H. NELSON, of Woburn.

“ “ 8—HENRY B. PEARSON, of Harvard.

“ “ 9—ALVIN G. UNDERWOOD, of Oxford.

“ “ 10—HOMER FOOTE, of Springfield.

“ “ 11—LUTHER GRIFFING, of Richmond.

The report was accepted by a unanimous vote, followed by great cheering. C. A. White submitted the following names of gentlemen to constitute the

WEBSTER EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE.

HUBBARD WINSLOW, of Boston.
 TOLMAN WILLEY, of Boston.
 HENRY LYMAN, of Watertown.
 CHARLES A. WHITE, of Boston.
 J. D. HEDGE, of Cambridge.
 JOHN L. DIMMOCK, of Watertown.
 CHARLES A. WELLS, of Boston.
 THOMAS THACHER, of Roxbury.
 ARTHUR PICKERING, of Boston.
 CHARLES TORREY, of Boston.

This report was accepted, whereupon the following resolution was adopted :

Resolved, That the Executive State Committee be, and they hereby are instructed and authorized to fill any vacancy that may occur in the ticket of Electors, or in their own body ; also, to add to the number of the Executive Committee at their pleasure, and to take all other proper measures to promote the objects for which the present ticket of Electors is nominated.

Addresses were made by Messrs. M. H. Smith, A. Wilson, H. Winslow, and S. L. Cutter. They were speeches of a high tone—moral in sentiment and dignified in thought.

Mr. Winslow, at the conclusion of his speech, offered the following resolutions, which were adopted :

Resolved, That those men who serve their country most faithfully in the army, ought to receive from their country its highest military honors ; and those men who serve their country most faithfully in the councils of state, ought to receive from their country its highest civic honors.

Resolved, That our country, our whole country, in all its vast extent and various interests, is entitled to the equal and full protection of its Constitution, in all its provisions and requirements.

Resolved, That whatever sectional jealousies and agitations may occur to mar the peace of the Union, we shall ever hold it to be our privilege and our duty, firmly to abide by the principles, and faithfully to fulfil the conditions of the national compact.

Resolved, That the man who has served his country the most faithfully for the longest period, in the councils of state, of any man living, is DANIEL WEBSTER, and that to him, pre-eminently, the nation owes its highest civic honors.

Resolved, That as citizens of this republic, we will do what we can to induce our country to pay this glorious debt.

Resolved, That whether our country shall prove faithful or false to this obligation, it shall ever be among our happiest reflections, that we were true to our country in this matter, and did what every citizen ought to have done—CAST OUR MOST HEARTY VOTE FOR DANIEL WEBSTER.

At a quarter of ten o'clock the Convention adjourned, amid cheers for DANIEL WEBSTER of Massachusetts and CHARLES J. JENKINS of Georgia, the candidates of the Union Whigs of Massachusetts, for President and Vice President of the United States.





